

Fork instructs 179th AMS graduates

Story by

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We all remember basic military training. We remember the early mornings, the rigorous training schedule and the demanding drill instructors. So why would anyone want to go back?

Capt. Jerry Fork, 179th personnel director, in a sense decided to go back to basic training; however this time it was as a faculty advisor for the Academy of Military Science in Knoxville, Tenn.

The Academy of Military Science is the six-week training school that prepares and trains officers for the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve components. A faculty advisor is similar to a basic training drill instructor.

"An FA acts as a drill instructor, coach and mentor during the course of six weeks," said Fork. "You evaluate performance, facilitate leadership development exercises and discussion inside and outside the classroom and provide feedback to the officer candidates on their performance." Fork volunteered for this special assignment and moved to Tennessee in January 2002. He shadowed for the first AMS class to come through in January and recently became a faculty advisor carrying his own squadron of 20 officer candidates.

Fork took on his first squadron on March 18, 2002, the same class that hosted three members of the 179th AW. 2nd Lts. Matt O'Brien, Kelly Shifflet and Adrian Colosimo graduated with their gold bars on April 26 and all knew Capt. Fork prior to leaving.

"He was my recruiter here," said Shifflet. "Really the only dealing I had with him was he inspected our room



The 179th's newest 2Lts. from left to right Matt O'Brien, Kelly Shifflet and Adrian Colosimo talk about their experiences at the Academy of Military Sciences.

once. We did a lot of push-ups that day. It was such a different atmosphere down there that I did whatever he told me."

"Jerry didn't tell me much about AMS prior to leaving," Colosimo said. "He stayed in contact with me before my arrival to make sure everything was taken care of, but I knew he wouldn't be my advisor."

O'Brien said he didn't have any dealings with Fork at all. He just remembered watching Fork make Shifflet do push-ups when she was squadron commander.

"It was a good school," O'Brien said. "One of the few that teaches you followership."

Fork said the advisors get together before every class to review the roster to see if they know anyone coming to the course. The advisors try to ensure

they do not have anyone in their squadrons that they know.

"I really had limited contact with the new lieutenants," Fork said. "The only place I really encountered them was outside."

Fork said being an FA is something he always wanted to do.

"In this position, you get to work with the officer candidates from start to finish and it gives you great satisfaction handing them their gold bars," Fork said. "Seeing the finished product, a new 2nd Lt., and knowing you had a direct impact on their development is the best feeling in the world."